

# Energy

## Energy policy

influences our foreign relations, affects our economy, and impacts our environment. I support a national and regional energy policy based on the principles of protecting low-cost power in the Pacific Northwest, reducing America's dependence on foreign oil, and investing in renewable energy technologies.

Low cost electricity is a fundamental component of the Northwest economy. Throughout the past half century, the promise of low electricity costs attracted numerous manufacturers to the Northwest, stimulating economic growth and creating local jobs. Restoring low cost power is critical to stimulating an economic recovery in Southwest Washington. That's why I have fought, and will continue fighting, to lower electricity costs for Northwest ratepayers.

I am also committed to reducing U.S. dependence on foreign sources of oil. In Congress, I have strongly supported efforts to promote renewable energy, energy conservation, and energy efficiency. I have written legislation to promote green, energy efficient commercial buildings and technologies. In addition to reducing our dependence on Middle East oil, such technologies prevent air and water pollution, reduce airborne toxins that aggravate asthma, and avoid the dangerous piping of oil and gas. Moreover, investing in renewable technologies stimulates new domestic industries, generates jobs, and promotes economic growth.

## Investing in Renewable Technologies

At a time of record-breaking oil prices, conflict in the Middle East, and global warming, Congressman Baird believes we need a new approach to our outdated energy policy and must reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Congressman Baird is particularly concerned with global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions. The emission of carbon dioxide poses a threat to the environment and the well-being of people around the world. He believes that the United States has a responsibility to lead the rest of the world in combating global warming, and that is why he is a committed advocate for expanding renewable energy production in the Northwest. Producing energy domestically from renewable sources will promote national security, environmental conservation, and

economic growth. Unfortunately, less than two percent of our nation's electricity is generated by non-traditional sources of power such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy.

As a member of the Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Caucus in Congress, Congressman Baird has been a leader in the House in advocating for increased attention to the development of renewable energy technologies. He has sent letters to the Administration urging their support for renewable energy. He has also cosponsored legislation to increase development of plug-in hybrid vehicles, develop ocean renewable technologies through wave energy, increase the percentage of "flex-fuel" vehicles that run on biodiesel and extend and enhance tax incentives for the production and use of alternative energy.

Congressman Baird supported a comprehensive legislative package that aims to put us on a path toward energy independence, lowers energy prices, promotes energy efficiency and clean energy research, and begins to address global warming. This historic bill will make the U.S. more energy independent, respond to the global warming crisis, and grow our economy by improving vehicle fuel economy, increasing production of alternative fuels, setting new energy standards for appliances and lighting, increases energy savings in commercial, government, and public buildings, increases research and development into alternative fuels, and invests in "green" jobs. The package passed the House in December of 2007 and was signed into law.

Congressman Baird has also advocated for an extension of various important tax incentives that encourage the production of renewable energy, including wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, river currents, ocean tides, landfill gas, and trash combustion resources.

### Increasing Energy Efficiency

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to combat global warming and reduce our dependence on foreign oil is to conserve energy. Congressman Baird has been a leader in Congress on decreasing the use of electricity in this country by increase the energy efficiency of buildings.

Buildings currently account for 80 percent of all electric expenditures in the U.S. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 included targeted tax incentives to reduce power consumption in newly-constructed commercial buildings and retro-fitted existing commercial buildings. Unfortunately, these incentives were set to expire in 2006. In the 109th Congress, Congressman Baird helped introduce legislation that led to a one-year extension of the commercial buildings tax deduction. In 2007, Congressman Baird introduced the Buildings for the 21st Century Act to extend the deduction through 2013. This important legislation was included in an energy package that passed the House in August of 2007.

Congressman Baird is also an original cosponsor of the Cool and Efficient Buildings Investment Act, which would allow for a 20-year depreciation recovery for heating, ventilation, air condition, or commercial refrigeration systems. This bipartisan legislation gives an important incentive for building owners to upgrade to more energy efficient systems.

Finally, Congressman Baird believes we need to pass increased Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. He has cosponsored the Fuel Economy Reform Act, which would increase CAFE standards to 27.5 miles per gallon by 2012 and 35 miles per gallon by 2018. After 2018 it would require increases in fuel economy standards by 4 percent per year as long as it is determined to be technologically and economically feasible. It would further ensure that these increases in fuel economy standards do not compromise vehicle safety.

### Buying Green to Save Green

Congressman Baird is leading an effort to encourage consumers to spend their upcoming stimulus rebate checks on energy efficient products and services. He believes that there is a unique opportunity to invest the money in ways that will offer individual savings, stimulate the economy, and lower energy costs for years to come. He reached out to some of the largest home product retailers in the nation and many agreed to offer special incentives and promotions on energy efficient products and services.

Congressman Baird believes that this is a multi-win situation. Thanks to the promotions offered by retailers, people will save money right away on the purchase price of these products. In many instances, there are also tax credits and other benefits available for energy efficient products. By investing in energy conservation products, people will save even more money on their energy bills for years to come and increase the value of their home in the process. Nationwide, as more and more people reduce energy consumption, we will reduce the overall demand for energy, helping to lower prices across the board. Finally, by taking these steps together, we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help prevent climate change and ocean acidification.

### Ending Price Gouging at the Gas Pump

Congressman Baird believes the federal government has a responsibility to investigate price gouging by oil companies. Following Hurricane Katrina, Congressman Baird sent letters to the Administration and Speaker of the House demanding investigations into allegations of price gouging. In addition, Congressman Baird is an original cosponsor of the Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act. This legislation, which passed the House with bipartisan support, would ban the sale of gasoline and other liquid fuels at prices that are "unconscionably excessive" when the President declares an energy emergency. This bill gives the Federal Trade Commission the explicit authority to investigate and punish those who are involved in price gouging during an energy emergency.

Congressman Brian Baird also believes the federal government needs to crackdown on unregulated energy speculators who are likely manipulating markets and driving up gas prices. Congressman Baird is an original co-sponsor of the Prevent Unfair Manipulation of Prices (PUMP) Act. This legislation will provide federal oversight of the nearly 75 percent of energy speculation that is currently unregulated. In addition, it would increase penalties for market manipulators.

## Lowering Electricity Rates

Low-cost electricity is critical to sustaining the economy of our region. Low electricity rates allowed manufacturing to thrive in the Northwest for a half century. Unfortunately, our manufacturing base is threatened by electricity prices which have climbed as much as 50 percent since 2001. We simply cannot expect our manufacturing base to remain intact as electricity rates continue to climb. Congressman Baird has worked extensively to lower rates. He took the lead in Congress when Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposed a 15 percent rate increase. Eventually, BPA relented and lowered the 15 percent increase to two percent.

In maintaining his strong efforts to provide low electricity rates for consumers, Congressman Baird has led the effort in Congress to block an Administration proposal to require BPA to use additional revenue to pre-pay its debt to the U.S. Treasury. If this proposal were to take effect, Northwest ratepayers could see an increase of up to 10 percent in their monthly energy bills. As this would have a devastating impact on the Pacific Northwest, Congressman Baird will continue to fight to block this proposal.

## Monitoring Liquefied Natural Gas Proposal

In August of 2005, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 was signed into law. Among other things, the Energy Policy Act grants the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission exclusive authority to approve applications for onshore Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals. Congressman Baird voted for an amendment to strike this provision. The amendment would have protected the authority of state and local governments to ensure that LNG facilities are sited in areas where they do not pose a threat to public safety and ensure that such facilities are not located in places where they pose a threat to sensitive coastal and ocean areas. Unfortunately, this amendment failed by a slim margin.

Congressman Baird is concerned that residents of Southwest Washington near the proposed LNG facilities along the Columbia River may be negatively impacted by the new expedited process. After careful and thoughtful review of the Waterway Suitability Report for the proposed Bradwood Landing LNG project, Congressman Baird came out in opposition to the plan. While he recognizes the local benefits to the project, including job creation and gas production, there are three main areas of great concern to him: the safety and security measures that would

need to be implemented to make the Columbia River suitable for LNG traffic, the impact on the environment, and the effect the project, and accompanying pipeline, would have on private property owners.

As the process continues, Congressman Baird will continue to work with constituents and federal, state, and local stakeholders to ensure that Southwest Washington residents are consulted and that their concerns are adequately addressed.

### Protecting Our Community from Radioactive Waste

Approximately 54 million gallons of highly radioactive waste await treatment in temporary, underground storage tanks at Hanford. Some of the tanks have already leaked waste into the surrounding soil. Nuclear waste residuals collected from the Columbia River - which lies 12 miles from waste storage tanks - currently exceed levels scientists predicted would not be reached for hundreds of years. Congressman Baird believes the Department of Energy (DoE) is failing to fulfill its responsibilities to the citizens of Washington, in part because DoE has deposited low-level nuclear waste in unlined soil trenches. Under state law, significantly less dangerous wastes, such as municipal household garbage and gasoline tanks, cannot be dumped into unlined trenches. Congressman Baird introduced legislation to stop DoE from dumping nuclear waste into the soil.

Additionally, DoE has attempted to internally and arbitrarily reclassify millions of gallons of high-level nuclear waste as low-level waste, blatantly violating the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, a position upheld in federal court. DoE then attempted to amend significant portions of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to allow reclassification of high level waste at Hanford. When this proposal came to the House of Representatives, Congressman Baird helped lead the successful fight in Congress to prevent DoE from abandoning high level nuclear waste at Hanford.

Department  
of Energy

House  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Senate  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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State Office of Trade and Economic Development & Energy Policy  
Division

Washington  
Utilities and Transportation Commission

Bonneville  
Power Administration